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INFORMATION

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COUNTRY Colombia

DATE DISTR. 10 February 1949

SUBJECT Resignation of Diego Montana Cuellar as Legal
Adviser of Fedepetrol
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SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. Diego Montana Cuellar, Legal Adviser (Asesor Juridico) of the Federacion Nacional de Petroleros (Fedepetrol) of Colombia, resigned his position with that organization during the IV Petroleum Conference held in Bogota in January 1949.
2. According to Jose Raquel Mercado, Secretary of the Syndicate of Maritime Terminal Workers, who attended the Petroleum Conference, Montana Cuellar's separation from the federation was brought about by the fact that he had failed to give a true accounting (cf. [REDACTED] for the full amount of funds received by him from the petroleum unions of Venezuela. This money had been forwarded to him to be used in the petroleum strike against the Tropical Oil Company in Barrancabermeja in August 1948. Mercado also stated that Montana Cuellar had been severely criticized for his activities during this strike by the workers who claimed that he had abused his position as the representative of the unions.
3. Augusto Duran Ospino, Secretary General of the Partido Comunista Obrero (PCO - Communist Workers Party), stated that Montana Cuellar's retirement from Fedepetrol would prove embarrassing to the rival Partido Comunista de Colombia (PCO - Communist Party of Colombia) group, inasmuch as the latter had publicly congratulated him on 22 November 1948 on his successful handling of the petroleum strike, while at the same time the PCO had criticized his activities and objected to the placing of his picture in the offices of the Tropical Oil Company workers' syndicate headquarters.
4. Montana Cuellar's resignation will leave him free to pursue his plan to enter the political field as candidate for Congress in the forthcoming June elections. This plan was confided by him to intimate friends in December 1948, at which time he indicated that he would resign his position as Legal Adviser to Fedepetrol at the end of the year in order to stand for election. However, in January 1949 Montana Cuellar entered into negotiations with the Shell Petroleum Company in an endeavor to extend the labor contract for an additional year (thus making it a two-year labor pact) and advised his friends that he had reconsidered his previous statements and had decided to remain with Fedepetrol.

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